

# the condition of education 2006



## INDICATOR 30

### Degrees Earned by Women

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2006*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2006*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.sap?pubid=2006071>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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# Completions

## Degrees Earned by Women

*Women have earned a greater percentage of bachelor's degrees than men since the early 1980s and now earn at least 4 out of 10 degrees in all fields except computer and information sciences and engineering.*

Women earn a greater number and proportion of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees than they did about 25 years ago. For example, the number of bachelor's degrees awarded to women increased from 455,800 in 1979–80 to 804,100 in 2003–04 (see supplemental table 30-1). Women have earned more bachelor's degrees than men every year since 1981–82 and more master's degrees since 1985–86 (NCES 2005-025, table 249). In 2003–04, women earned 57 percent of all bachelor's degrees. They also earned 59 percent of all master's degrees, and 48 percent of all doctoral degrees (see supplemental table 30-2).

The first section in the table below shows fields in which women earned 50 percent or more of the bachelor's degrees awarded in 1979–80 and continued to do so in 2003–04, ordered from highest to lowest according to the percentage of degrees awarded to women in 1979–80. In each of these fields except visual and performing arts, the percentage of degrees awarded to women increased between 1979–80 and 2003–04.

In the second section are fields in which women earned less than half of the bachelor's degrees awarded in 1979–80 but earned at least half by

2003–04. These fields included biological and biomedical sciences, where the proportion of degrees awarded to women increased from 42 to 62 percent, and business, where it increased from 34 to 50 percent.

The last section shows fields in which women earned less than half of the bachelor's degrees awarded in 1979–80 and still earned less than half in 2003–04. Women earned the smallest proportions of bachelor's degrees in 2003–04 in computer and information sciences (25 percent) and engineering (19 percent).

Women have made gains at the graduate level as well. In 2003–04, women earned 59 percent of master's degrees, compared with 53 percent in 1989–90 and 49 percent in 1979–80 (see supplemental table 30-2). However, in 2003–04, women still earned less than half of all master's degrees in business, computer and information sciences, engineering, mathematics, and physical sciences. At the doctoral level, women earned 48 percent of all degrees in 2003–04, up from 36 percent in 1989–90 and 30 percent in 1979–80. While women still earn less than half of doctoral degrees in a majority of fields, they have made gains in every field over the past 25 years.

<sup>1</sup> Includes other fields not shown separately.

NOTE: Based on data from Title IV degree-granting institutions. See supplemental note 10 for more detail. The first section of fields shows fields in which women earned at least 50 percent of the degrees in 1980 and in 2004. The second section (shaded) includes fields in which women earned less than half of the degrees in 1980 but had earned at least half by 2004. The last section shows fields in which women earned less than half of the bachelor's degrees awarded in 1980 and still earned less than half in 2004. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (forthcoming). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2005* (NCES 2006-030), tables 249 and 276–297. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1979–80 Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), “Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred” and 1989–90 through 2003–04 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, “Completions Survey” (IPEDS-C:87-00) and IPEDS, Fall 2004.

**BACHELOR'S DEGREES: Percentage of bachelor's degrees earned by women and change in the percentage earned by women from 1979–80 to 2003–04, by field of study: Various years, 1979–80 through 2003–04**

Field of study	1979–80	1989–90	Change in percentage points between 1979–80 and 2003–04		
			1999–2000	2003–04	
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>57.2</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>8.4</b>
Health professions and related clinical sciences	82.3	84.6	83.5	86.5	4.2
Education	73.8	78.1	75.8	78.5	4.7
English language/literature/letters	65.1	67.0	67.8	68.9	3.8
Psychology	63.3	71.6	76.5	77.8	14.5
Visual and performing arts	63.2	62.0	59.2	61.1	-2.1
Communication, journalism, and related programs	52.3	60.5	61.2	64.6	12.4
Social sciences and history	43.6	44.2	51.2	50.9	7.3
Biological and biomedical sciences	42.1	50.8	58.2	62.2	20.1
Business	33.7	46.8	49.8	50.3	16.7
Mathematics and statistics	42.3	46.2	47.8	46.0	3.6
Computer/information sciences	30.2	29.9	28.1	25.1	-5.2
Agriculture/natural resources	29.6	31.6	42.9	47.9	18.3
Physical sciences and science technologies	23.7	31.3	40.3	41.7	18.1
Engineering and engineering technologies	9.4	14.1	18.7	18.8	9.4



FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
Supplemental Notes 3, 9, 10  
Supplemental Tables 30-1, 30-2  
NCES 2005-025

## Degrees Earned by Women

**Table 30-1. Number of bachelor's degrees earned by women, by field of study: Various years, 1979–80 through 2003–04**

Field of study	1979–80	1989–90	1999–2000	2003–04
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>455,800</b>	<b>559,600</b>	<b>707,500</b>	<b>804,100</b>
Health professions and related clinical sciences	52,500	49,900	67,500	63,900
Education	87,100	82,100	81,900	83,500
English language/literature/letters	21,000	31,400	34,000	37,200
Psychology	26,700	38,600	56,700	63,900
Visual and performing arts	25,800	24,700	34,800	47,100
Communication, journalism, and related programs	15,000	31,200	34,900	47,200
Social sciences and history	45,200	52,200	65,000	76,500
Biological and biomedical sciences	19,400	18,900	36,700	38,300
Business	62,100	116,200	127,400	154,600
Mathematics and statistics	4,800	6,600	5,500	6,100
Computer/information sciences	3,400	8,200	10,600	14,900
Agriculture/natural resources	6,800	4,100	10,400	10,900
Physical sciences and science technologies	5,500	5,000	7,400	7,500
Engineering and engineering technologies	6,500	11,600	13,700	14,700

<sup>1</sup> Includes other fields not shown separately.

NOTE: See *supplemental note 10* for more information on fields of study. Data based on all degree-granting institutions.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (forthcoming). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2005* (NCES 2006-030), tables 249 and 276–297. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1979–80 Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), “Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred” and 1989–90 through 2003–04 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, “Completions Survey” (IPEDS-C:87-00) and IPEDS, Fall 2004.

## Degrees Earned by Women

**Table 30-2. Number and percentage of master's and doctoral degrees earned by women and change in the percentage earned by women from 1979–80 to 2003–04, by field of study: Various years, 1979–80 through 2003–04**

	1979–80		1989–90		1999–2000		2003–04		Change in percentage points between 1979–80 and 2003–04
Field of study	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total	
Master's degrees									
Total <sup>1</sup>	147,300	49.4	170,600	52.6	265,300	58.0	329,400	58.9	9.5
Health professions and related clinical sciences	11,300	73.6	15,900	78.0	33,100	77.7	35,300	78.5	4.9
Education	71,500	70.2	64,400	75.9	94,000	76.4	124,500	76.7	6.4
English language/literature/letters	3,800	63.8	4,200	66.4	4,700	67.0	5,500	69.1	5.3
Psychology	5,800	58.8	7,400	68.5	11,900	75.7	14,100	78.8	20.0
Visual and performing arts	4,600	53.3	4,800	56.3	6,200	57.2	7,400	57.1	3.8
Communication, journalism, and related programs	1,600	50.5	2,600	60.8	3,500	63.3	4,600	66.2	15.8
Biological and biomedical sciences	2,300	36.2	2,400	49.2	3,700	53.8	4,400	57.9	21.6
Social sciences and history	4,400	36.0	4,700	40.7	7,000	50.1	8,300	51.5	15.5
Agriculture/natural resources	900	22.5	1,100	33.8	2,000	46.0	2,500	51.8	29.3
Mathematics and statistics	1,000	36.1	1,500	40.1	1,500	45.5	1,900	45.1	9.0
Business	12,200	22.3	26,100	34.0	44,500	39.9	58,500	42.0	19.7
Computer/information sciences	800	20.9	2,700	28.1	5,000	33.4	6,300	31.2	10.2
Physical sciences and science technologies	1,000	18.5	1,400	26.1	1,700	35.3	2,200	39.6	21.1
Engineering and engineering technologies	1,200	7.3	3,500	14.0	5,600	21.0	7,500	21.4	14.1
Doctoral degrees									
Total <sup>1</sup>	9,700	29.7	14,000	36.4	19,800	44.1	23,100	47.7	18.0
English language/literature/letters	600	46.9	500	55.0	900	58.4	700	60.3	13.4
Psychology	1,500	43.4	2,200	58.9	3,200	67.7	3,300	69.0	25.6
Health professions and related clinical sciences	400	43.1	800	56.2	1,300	64.9	3,100	71.1	28.0
Education	3,200	43.9	3,700	57.3	4,100	64.2	4,700	66.1	22.2
Communication, journalism, and related programs	100	37.3	100	46.7	200	52.9	200	56.3	19.0
Visual and performing arts	200	36.9	400	44.4	600	52.4	700	55.4	18.4
Social sciences and history	900	27.0	1,000	32.9	1,700	41.2	1,600	42.6	15.6
Biological and biomedical sciences	900	25.5	1,400	36.8	2,300	44.3	2,400	46.5	21.0
Business	100	15.3	300	25.2	400	32.0	500	35.2	19.9
Mathematics and statistics	100	13.8	200	17.8	300	25.3	300	28.1	14.3
Physical sciences and science technologies	400	12.3	800	19.1	1,000	25.3	1,100	27.8	15.5
Agriculture/natural resources	100	11.3	300	19.8	400	31.3	400	36.0	24.7
Computer/information sciences	#	11.3	100	14.8	100	16.8	200	22.0	10.8
Engineering and engineering technologies	100	3.9	500	9.0	800	15.4	1,100	17.7	13.8

# Rounds to zero.

<sup>1</sup> Includes other fields not shown separately.

NOTE: See *supplemental note 10* for more information on fields of study. Data based on all degree-granting institutions. The first section of fields for master's degrees earned by women shows fields in which women earned at least 50 percent of the degrees in 1980 and in 2004. The second section (shaded) includes fields in which women earned less than half of the degrees in 1980 but had earned at least half by 2004. The last section under master's degrees shows fields in which women earned less than half of the master's degrees awarded in 1980 and still earned less than half in 2004. The doctoral degree section is split into two sections. The first section shows fields in which women earned less than half of the degrees awarded in 1980, but more than half in 2004. The second section (shaded) shows degrees in which women earned less than half of the degrees in 1980 and still earned less than half in 2004. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (forthcoming). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2005* (NCES 2006-030), tables 249 and 276–297. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1979–80 Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), “Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred” and 1989–90 through 2003–04 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, “Completions Survey” (IPEDS-C:87-00) and IPEDS, Fall 2004.